Amendments to the Claims

Amendments to the claims are reflected in the listing of claims below. By this amendment, claims 1-50 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 51-89 are new. No new matter has been added.

1-50.   (Cancelled)

51.   (New) A gaming system comprising:

a plurality of gaming units coupled to a data network, each gaming unit having a configuration for executing a game application enabling a player to play a game of chance on the gaming unit, a configuration of the gaming system defined by the plurality of gaming unit configurations;

a memory device storing a license parameter and a corresponding license parameter value of a license for determining access to the gaming system configuration, the license applicable to the plurality of gaming units;

a monitoring apparatus separate from the gaming units, the monitoring apparatus coupled to the data network to monitor the plurality of gaming units, the monitoring apparatus including a processor programmed to:

   i)   compare a real-time parameter value with the license parameter value, the real-time parameter value determined from a current configuration of the plurality of gaming unit configurations,

   ii)   determine that the gaming system configuration is not in compliance with the license when the real-time parameter exceeds the license parameter value, and

   iii)   when the gaming system configuration is not in compliance with the license, prevent reconfiguration of the gaming system configuration without interrupting game play on the gaming units.

52.   (New) The gaming system of claim 51, the gaming system configuration including a function of the gaming system.

53.   (New) The gaming system of claim 51, the gaming system configuration including a function of a device coupled to the data network.

54.   (New) The gaming system of claim 51, the monitoring apparatus coupled to continuously receive data from all of the plurality of gaming units.

55.   (New) The gaming system of claim 51, the monitoring apparatus further including a display coupled to the processor, the processor further programmed to:

        iv) display a message indicating an exceeded license when the gaming system configuration is not in compliance with the license.

56.   (New) The gaming system of claim 51, the monitoring apparatus further including an input device coupled to the processor, the input device accessible by a gaming system operator.

57.   (New) The gaming system of claim 51, wherein preventing reconfiguration of the gaming system configuration without interrupting game play on the gaming units includes preventing an operator from reconfiguring the gaming system configuration.

58.   (New) The gaming system of claim 51, wherein the license parameter value is a maximum allowable number of gaming units in the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current number of gaming units coupled to the data network.

59.   (New) The gaming system of claim 51, wherein the license parameter value is a valid gaming system operation mode of the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current operation mode of the gaming system.

60.   (New) The gaming system of claim 51, wherein the license parameter value is a maximum allowable number of operator workstations that may be incorporated in the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current number of operator workstations coupled to the data network.

61.   (New) The gaming system of claim 51, wherein the license parameter value is a maximum allowable number and type of reports that may be generated by the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current number and type of reports being generated by the gaming system.

62.   (New) The gaming system of claim 51, wherein the license parameter value is a site identification of the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current site identification incorporated in the gaming system.

63.   (New) The gaming system of claim 51, wherein the license parameter value is an expiration date of the license, and the real-time parameter value is a current date of the gaming system.

64.   (New) A monitoring apparatus coupled to a data network to monitor a plurality of gaming units coupled to the data network, the monitoring apparatus separate from the gaming units, each gaming unit having a configuration for executing a game application enabling a player to play a game of chance on the gaming unit, a configuration of the gaming system defined by the plurality of gaming unit configurations, the monitoring apparatus comprising:

a memory device storing a license parameter and a corresponding license parameter value of a license for determining access to the gaming system configuration, the license applicable to the plurality of gaming units; and

a processor programmed to:

i) compare a real-time parameter value with the license parameter value, the real-time parameter value determined from a current configuration of the plurality of gaming unit configurations,

ii) determine that the gaming system configuration is not in compliance with the license when the real-time parameter exceeds the license parameter value, and

iii) when the gaming system configuration is not in compliance with the license, prevent reconfiguration of the gaming system configuration without interrupting game play on the gaming units.

65.   (New) The monitoring apparatus of claim 64, the gaming system configuration including a function of the gaming system.

66.   (New) The monitoring apparatus of claim 64, the gaming system configuration including a function of a device coupled to the data network.

67.   (New) The monitoring apparatus of claim 64, the monitoring apparatus coupled to continuously receive data from all of the plurality of gaming units.

68. (New) The monitoring apparatus of claim 64, the monitoring apparatus further including a display coupled to the processor, the processor further programmed to:

        iv) display a message indicating an exceeded license when the gaming system configuration is not in compliance with the license.

69. (New) The monitoring apparatus of claim 64, the monitoring apparatus further including an input device coupled to the processor, the input device accessible by a gaming system operator.

70. (New) The monitoring apparatus of claim 64, wherein preventing reconfiguration of the gaming system configuration without interrupting game play on the gaming units includes preventing an operator from reconfiguring the gaming system configuration.

71. (New) The monitoring apparatus of claim 64, wherein the license parameter value is a maximum allowable number of gaming units in the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current number of gaming units coupled to the data network.

72. (New) The monitoring apparatus of claim 64, wherein the license parameter value is a valid gaming system operation mode of the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current operation mode of the gaming system.

73. (New) The monitoring apparatus of claim 64, wherein the license parameter value is a maximum allowable number of operator workstations that may be incorporated in the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current number of operator workstations coupled to the data network.

74. (New) The monitoring apparatus of claim 64, wherein the license parameter value is a maximum allowable number and type of reports that may be generated by the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current number and type of reports being generated by the gaming system.

75.   (New) The monitoring apparatus of claim 64, wherein the license parameter value is a site identification of the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current site identification incorporated in the gaming system.

76.   (New) The monitoring apparatus of claim 64, wherein the license parameter value is an expiration date of the license, and the real-time parameter value is a current date of the gaming system.

77.   (New) In a gaming system including a plurality of gaming units coupled to a data network, each gaming unit having a configuration for executing a game application enabling a player to play a game of chance on the gaming unit, a configuration of the gaming system defined by the plurality of gaming unit configurations, a method comprising the steps of:
       providing a memory device storing a license parameter and a corresponding license parameter value of a license for determining access to the gaming system configuration, the license applicable to the plurality of gaming units;
       providing a monitoring apparatus separate from the gaming units, the monitoring apparatus coupled to the data network to monitor the plurality of gaming units, the monitoring apparatus including a processor programmed to:
              i) compare a real-time parameter value with the license parameter value, the real-time parameter value determined from a current configuration of the plurality of gaming unit configurations,
              ii) determine that the gaming system configuration is not in compliance with the license when the real-time parameter exceeds the license parameter value, and
              iii) when the gaming system configuration is not in compliance with the license, prevent reconfiguration of the gaming system configuration without interrupting game play on the gaming units.

78.   (New) The method of claim 77, the gaming system configuration including a function of the gaming system.

79.   (New) The method of claim 77, the gaming system configuration including a function of a device coupled to the data network.

80. (New) The method of claim 77, the monitoring apparatus coupled to continuously receive data from all of the plurality of gaming units.

81. (New) The method of claim 77, the monitoring apparatus further including a display coupled to the processor, the processor further programmed to:

iv) display a message indicating an exceeded license when the gaming system configuration is not in compliance with the license.

82. (New) The method of claim 77, the monitoring apparatus further including an input device coupled to the processor, the input device accessible by a gaming system operator.

83. (New) The method of claim 77, wherein preventing reconfiguration of the gaming system configuration without interrupting game play on the gaming units includes preventing an operator from reconfiguring the gaming system configuration.

84. (New) The method of claim 77, wherein the license parameter value is a maximum allowable number of gaming units in the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current number of gaming units coupled to the data network.

85. (New) The method of claim 77, wherein the license parameter value is a valid gaming system operation mode of the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current operation mode of the gaming system.

86. (New) The method of claim 77, wherein the license parameter value is a maximum allowable number of operator workstations that may be incorporated in the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current number of operator workstations coupled to the data network.

87. (New) The method of claim 77, wherein the license parameter value is a maximum allowable number and type of reports that may be generated by the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current number and type of reports being generated by the gaming system.

88. (New) The method of claim 77, wherein the license parameter value is a site identification of the gaming system, and the real-time parameter value is a current site identification incorporated in the gaming system.

89. (New) The method of claim 77, wherein the license parameter value is an expiration date of the license, and the real-time parameter value is a current date of the gaming system.